



# THE LIBERTY "76" BOYS OF 76

A Weekly Magazine containing Stories of the American Revolution.

Issued Weekly—By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at the New York Post Office, February 4, 1901, by Frank Tousey.

No. 33.

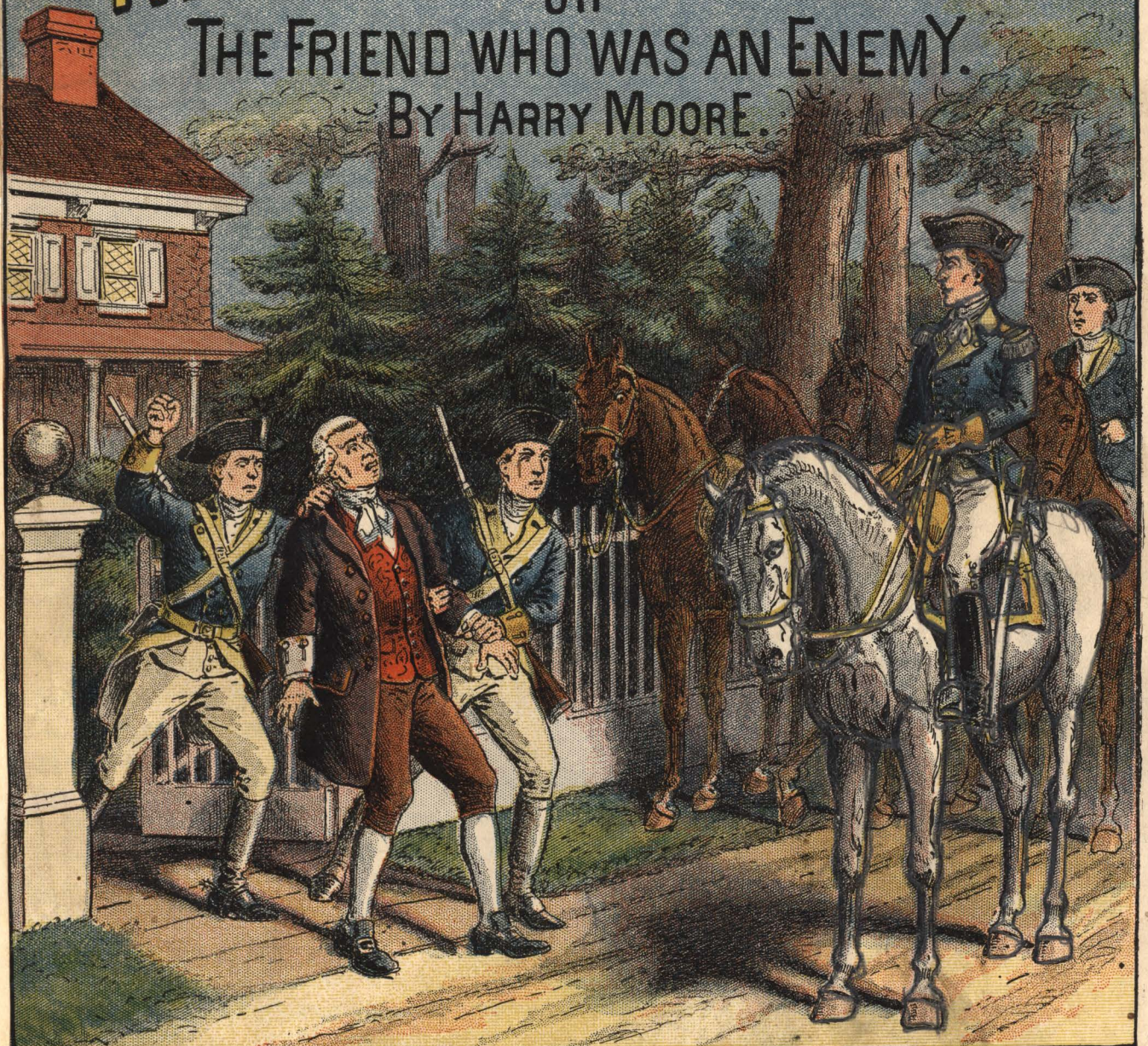
NEW YORK, AUGUST 16, 1901.

Price 5 Cents.

## THE LIBERTY BOYS DUPED; OR

### THE FRIEND WHO WAS AN ENEMY.

BY HARRY MOORE.



"Here is the man who pretended to be a friend, Dick," said Bob; "what shall we do with him?"  
"Bind his arms!" said Dick, sternly.



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## CHAPTER I.

### BARON VON STEUBEN ARRIVES AT VALLEY FORGE.

"Say, Dick, that Dutch baron is a funny fellow, isn't he?"

"Yes, Bob; but he knows what he is about."

"You're right about that, old man. If he stays here long he'll make soldiers out of our men."

"Yes, there's no doubt of that; they're learning fast."

Time: January, 1778.

Place: Valley Forge.

The patriot army was in winter quarters.

Valley Forge was a cluster of log cabins.

These cabins had been built by the soldiers.

Although each cabin had a huge fireplace, and wood was plenty, the soldiers suffered a great deal from the cold, owing to the fact that they were insufficiently clothed.

Many of them had scarcely rags enough to cover themselves with.

Hundreds were barefooted.

As we have said, these men suffered greatly, but there were few complaints.

They were brave, strong-hearted men.

They were striving to achieve their independence.

They were willing to suffer, and, if need be, die for the great cause.

A few days before the day of which we write a newcomer had arrived at Valley Forge.

This newcomer was Baron von Steuben.

The baron was a veteran soldier.

He had fought under Frederick the Great of Prussia.

He had studied the art of war and practiced it until there was little he did not know of military matters.

He had crossed the ocean and come to Valley Forge for the purpose of teaching the American soldiers the value of military training as an aid in fighting.

He had gone to work at once on reaching Valley Forge and had worked steadily, from morning till night, every day since he had arrived, showing the patriot soldiers how to perform all the rapid and accurate movements which had made the Prussian army so formidable in battle.

On this morning of which we write—a cold morning, by the way, with two or three inches of snow on the ground—the baron was hard at work drilling awkward squads.

Musket in hand, he was showing them, personally, how to handle a gun and how to execute the various maneuvers.

Standing beside a log cabin, sheltered from the keen north wind, were two handsome, alert-looking youths about nineteen years of age.

They were watching the baron drill the soldiers.

This was what had called forth the remarks from the youths as given at the beginning of this story.

The youths in question were Dick Slater and Bob Estabrook.

They were members of a company of youths known as "The Liberty Boys of '76."

Dick Slater was the captain of the company.

This company of youths had distinguished itself during the time it had been in the patriot army.

Even now, during this terrible winter at Valley Forge, the youths were doing good work.

Mounted on good horses, they were almost constantly scouring the surrounding country.

They chased small bands of redcoats, frequently; they foraged successfully and brought a great deal of food into the camp.

Often they stopped farmers who were on their way to Philadelphia with wagon-loads of provisions which they intended to sell to the redcoats, and forced them to drive to the American encampment instead.

The youths were even now getting ready for an expedition of this kind.

The majority of the horses had been saddled and bridled, and all would be ready to start in a few minutes.

The "Liberty Boys," a hundred in number, soon appeared, leading their horses, and Dick and Bob turned to their horses, which stood near, and leaped into the saddles.

A few minutes later the entire party rode out of the encampment.

"Which way, Dick?" asked Bob.

"Oh, it doesn't make any difference, I guess; we might as well ride straight on toward Philadelphia."



"I guess you're right; the closer we get to Philadelphia, the more likely we are to run across redcoats."

The "Liberty Boys" rode onward at a sweeping gallop. Dick and Bob kept a sharp lookout.

They were eager to see a party of the British.

They enjoyed chasing the redcoats and fighting the British.

"A good fight with the redcoats will warm a fellow up on the coldest day," Bob often said.

"We'll freeze to death if we don't run across a party of redcoats pretty soon," said Bob, grumblingly, when they had been riding about an hour.

"We may sight a party of them, pretty soon, Bob," said Dick.

"I hope so."

"I'll tell you what we will do, Bob, we'll go on to Brinker's Tavern at the cross-roads, and stop there and rest a while and wait. If we don't see any redcoats, some farmers may come along with wagon-loads of provisions and we will take possession of the wagons and see to it that the provisions reach our hungry comrades at Valley Forge instead of the well-filled redcoats at Philadelphia."

"That's a good idea, Dick."

The youths rode onward at a gallop, and presently came in sight of a large, rambling building standing at a point near where two roads crossed.

This building was Brinker's Tavern.

Just back of the tavern was some heavy timber, the trees growing up to within a few yards of the rear of the building.

The youths rode up to the tavern and dismounted.

They tied their horses and entered the tavern.

The room which the youths entered was a very large one. It would easily have held two hundred people.

At one side of the room was a huge fireplace in which was a roaring fire.

The "Liberty Boys" were chilled by their long ride in the cold, and the roaring fire in the huge fireplace was a pleasing sight to them.

"How do you do, Mr. Brinker?" said Dick to a man behind a bar which extended across one end of the room.

"How are you, Dick? How are you, young gentlemen?" the man replied.

"We're all right, Mr. Brinker, only a little bit cold. We'll thaw out a bit here by your fire, if you have no objections."

"None at all, Dick; glad to have you do so."

The man was the owner of the tavern.

Dick and the youths had been there a number of times before.

This was how the man came to know Dick by name.

Mr. Brinker professed to be a patriot.

He posed as such before the "Liberty Boys," and Dick had never seen anything in the man's actions to indicate that he was other than what he professed to be, he could see no reason for refusing to credit the man's assertion.

"Seen any redcoats around here lately, Mr. Brinker?" asked Bob.

The man shook his head.

"No, not lately," was the reply. "It has been three or four days since I saw a redcoat."

"I'm sorry for that. I was in hopes you might have seen some this morning and could tell us which way to go to look for them."

"No, I haven't seen any this morning."

The "Liberty Boys" talked and laughed while the tavern-keeper industriously worked away in an attempt to polish the rough, wooden bar.

Presently the man caught Dick's eye and nodded to him.

Dick left his position in front of the fireplace and walked over to where the tavern-keeper stood.

"I hear you've got a new man up at Valley Forge," the tavern-keeper remarked.

Dick looked slightly puzzled.

"A new man?" he remarked, half-questioningly.

"Yes; a military man, an instructor in military tactics or something like that."

"Oh, you mean Baron von Steuben."

"I guess so. So that's his name, is it?"

"Yes."

"He must be a Dutchman."

"He is a German."

"Does he understand his business?"

"So far as I am able to judge, he does."

"You think he will be able to teach our soldiers something, then?"

"Yes; they have learned a good deal already."

"How long is he going to stay at Valley Forge?"

"I don't know. All winter, I suppose, or as long as it is needed."

"Well, I hope he'll succeed in teaching our soldiers enough about the art of war so that they will be able to out-manuever and out-fight the British the next time the two armies come together."

"I hope so," said Dick.

"About one more affair like the Brandywine will finish the patriot army, Dick."

"Oh, I don't know!" the youth replied. "I hardly think that. Still, a victory for our army would be a great thing."



for us, as it would give our men fresh courage, put new life and energy into them."

"Yes, I suppose it would."

At this instant a beautiful girl of about seventeen years entered the room.

The girl was Mary Brinker, the tavern-keeper's daughter. The girl's face was flushed and she looked somewhat excited.

Dick lifted his hat and bowed.

"Good morning, Miss Mary," he said.

"Good morning, Dick," the girl replied.

Then she added: "A large body of redcoats is coming. I saw it from an upstairs window."

A frown appeared upon the face of Mr. Brinker.

It remained but an instant, and then was gone.

Dick noted it, however.

Dick wondered whether it was the fact that the redcoats were coming or that his daughter had told of their coming that had worried the tavern-keeper.

Dick decided that it must have been the former, and then dismissed it from his mind.

Dick turned his attention to the girl.

"Which direction are the redcoats coming from?" he asked.

"From the eastward."

"From the direction of Philadelphia, eh?"

"Yes."

"How many of the redcoats do you think there are?"

"It looks as if there might be two or three hundred of them."

"How far away are they?"

"Nearly a mile."

"I guess I'll go up and take a look at them."

Dick hastened over to where the "Liberty Boys" were congregated.

He informed them of the fact that a party of British were advancing toward the tavern.

The youths became excited at once.

"Hurrah!" cried Bob. "There's a chance that we may get our blood to circulating to-day, after all."

"Miss Mary says it looks as if there are two or three hundred of them," said Dick; "and we may have to act on the defensive. I am going upstairs and take an observation and size the redcoats up. You boys hold yourselves ready for instant action when I come back."

"All right, Dick," said Bob.

Dick, accompanied by Mary Brinker and her father, went upstairs.

The three made their way along a hallway to the extreme eastern end of the hall.

At this point there was a window.

Mr. Brinker raised the window and the three gazed eagerly down the road toward the east.

About three-quarters of a mile distant a party of horsemen could be seen.

Dick eyed the party, critically.

He was an expert at judging numbers.

"You were right, Miss Mary. There must be nearly three hundred of those fellows," Dick remarked.

"I thought so." And then, in an eager voice: "You will not try to fight them?"

"Why not?" asked Dick.

"They outnumber you, three to one."

"That is not great odds."

"It seems so to me. I should think it would be overwhelming odds."

"Not at all, Miss Mary."

Dick turned away and started back downstairs.

Mr. Brinker and his daughter followed closely.

"Are you going to ambush them?" asked the tavern-keeper.

There was a somewhat anxious tone to his voice, Dick thought.

"No," the youth replied, "we will not ambush them. It would be scarcely possible to do so, anyway, for the reason that they will see us when we go out to get our horses; the redcoats will be on their guard against an ambush."

"True," agreed Mr. Brinker; "I had not thought of that."

A close observer might have imagined that there was relief in the man's tone.

Dick was thinking of other things, however, and did not notice anything of this kind.

They were soon back downstairs.

"We will go out and mount our horses, boys," Dick said.

"We will wait till the British get close up to us and then we will charge them."

"Hurrah! That's the talk!" said Bob. "Come on, boys!"

The "Liberty Boys" hastened out of the tavern.

Hastening to where their horses stood, the youths untied them and mounted.

By this time the redcoats were within half a mile of the tavern.

The "Liberty Boys" sat quietly on their horses and awaited the approach of the enemy.

Closer and closer came the redcoats.

Soon they were not more than a quarter of a mile distant.

"Get ready!" ordered Dick. "Remember, it is to be two



pistol volleys as we advance and then the saber at close quarters!"

The "Liberty Boys" gathered up the reins with their left hands and drew pistols with their right hands.

Dick watched the approaching redcoats, closely.

He waited until they were within about two hundred yards of the tavern, and then he gave the command:

"Forward, all! Charge!"

## CHAPTER II.

### ODDS OF SIX TO ONE.

The "Liberty Boys" urged their horses forward at a gallop.

Just as they did so they were treated to a surprise.

The loud, clear notes of a bugle was heard.

The sound came from a direction at right angles with the course being pursued by the redcoats and the "Liberty Boys."

The sound came from somewhere off toward the right-hand.

The next instant a body of British dragoons dashed into view, coming up the cross-road from the southward.

It was a larger party than the other.

Dick judged that there were at least four hundred men in the party.

"A trap!" he thought.

Then in a loud voice he cried:

"Halt! Right about, face!"

The "Liberty Boys" had seen the other body of redcoats as soon as Dick had seen it, and understood the situation.

They realized that it would not do to charge the redcoats in front of them as the other party would come in behind them and they would be between two fires.

The instant Dick gave the order, therefore, for them to halt and right about, face, they obeyed.

They had executed the movement almost by the time he had finished giving the command.

The "Liberty Boys" dashed back to the tavern at full speed.

They did not stop at the tavern.

Dick did not think it would be treating Mr. Brinker right for them to take refuge in the tavern and subject it to assault and damage from the redcoats.

"To the timber!" he cried. "To the timber, and dismount! Then we'll give them a fight, if they want it."

A loud cheer went up from the "Liberty Boys."

Although more than six to one, they were ready to fight but they wished to be on as nearly equal terms as possible.

The redcoats dashed after the "Liberty Boys."

The youths rode past the tavern and on to the timber.

As soon as they were among the trees the youths leaped off their horses.

Each youth ran his arm through the bridle rein and then, with a pistol in each hand, they awaited the approach of the redcoats.

They did not have long to wait.

The redcoats were advancing at a gallop and were soon close at hand.

Dick waited until the dragoons were within fifty feet and then cried out, in a loud, ringing voice:

"Fire!"

Crash! Roar!

The "Liberty Boys" were splendid shots with the pistol.

The volley did considerable execution.

Several saddles were emptied.

A number of the redcoats were seen to reel.

"Give them another volley!" cried Dick. "Fire!"

Crash! Roar!

Fully as much execution was done this time as had been done the first time.

The redcoats were thrown into disorder.

The two volleys had demoralized them.

Each and every "Liberty Boy" possessed four pistols.

Thrusting the empty pistols back in their belts they drew the loaded weapons.

Again Dick gave the order to fire.

The order was obeyed.

This was a much warmer reception than the redcoats had bargained for.

They were thrown into almost inextricable confusion.

This was what Dick desired.

He ordered the youths to fire still another volley.

They did so.

This last volley made the demoralization of the redcoats complete.

Dick possessed all the qualities which go to make a good general.

His keen eyes took in the situation.

He knew that the time to strike a decisive, finishing blow had arrived.

"Mount and charge!" he cried. "Give them the saber!"

This was the order the youths wished to hear given.

To replace the pistols in their belts, throw the bridle rein over the horses' heads and leap into the saddles was but the work of an instant.



Then out from among the trees dashed the "Liberty Boys."

They drew their sabers as they went.

They gave vent to wild, ringing cheers.

They also gave utterance to their battle cry:

"Down with the king! Long live Liberty!"

As the youths dashed forward, a few scattering shots were fired at them by the redcoats.

Not one of the "Liberty Boys" were killed, and only one or two were slightly wounded.

The shots fired at them only served to increase the enthusiasm of the "Liberty Boys."

They answered the shots with cheers, and waved their sabers in the air.

The redcoats became demoralized with fear.

They turned their horses and dashed away as swiftly as possible.

The "Liberty Boys" pursued them.

Had it not been such a serious matter, it would have been a comical sight to see the little band of "Liberty Boys" chasing five or six times their number of redcoats.

Dick again soon demonstrated that he possessed the qualities which go to make a good general.

There is an old saying, "Build a bridge of gold for a flying enemy."

Dick realized the truth of this old saying.

He did not allow his "Liberty Boys" to chase the redcoats very far.

He knew that the redcoats might recover from their demoralization at any moment.

Should they do so they would turn on their pursuers.

In that case the "Liberty Boys" would have to turn and flee in their turn.

Dick did not wish this to happen.

It would be much better for them to turn of their own accord.

So Dick gave the order for the "Liberty Boys" to halt.

The "Liberty Boys" obeyed without a murmur, though it was evident that they would much rather have kept up the pursuit.

Bob was the only one who said anything.

"Great guns, Dick!" he exclaimed. "We haven't had any fun at all, yet! I haven't begun to get warmed up yet. Let's chase those fellows clear to the Schuylkill and into the water up to their necks."

Dick shook his head.

"We have done very well, Bob," he said. "We ought to be satisfied."

"All right, you're the boss, Dick."

The "Liberty Boys" rode back to the tavern.

They leaped to the ground and tied their horses.

Then they proceeded to reload their pistols.

It was important that they should be ready for the redcoats in case they should return.

Dick kept his eyes on the redcoats while his "Liberty Boys" were engaged in loading their pistols.

He saw the redcoats come to a stop.

Dick wondered if they would come back.

The redcoats remained stationary for a few minutes.

They were evidently discussing the situation.

Presently they turned their horses and rode back toward the tavern.

"They're coming back, Dick," said Bob.

"I see they are," was the reply.

"I'm glad they're coming back, Dick. It will give us a chance to chase them."

"Well, I can't say that I am glad they are coming back, Bob; they out-number us too greatly. I believe I should have liked it better if they had gone away."

Dick then gave the order for the "Liberty Boys" to retire to the timber.

The youths unhitched their horses and led them past the tavern and toward the timber which had sheltered them before.

In going from the tavern to the timber they passed a score or more dead and wounded redcoats.

The groans and cries of some of the wounded men were pitiful to hear.

Several of the wounded redcoats were calling for water, and Dick, Bob and several others of the "Liberty Boys" paused and gave the poor fellows water.

The wounded men were lying in the snow, freezing on the outside and burning up with fever within.

The redcoats were now close at hand, and Dick and his comrades entered the timber, expecting that the redcoats would immediately advance and attack them.

Their expectations were not realized.

The redcoats stopped when they got to the tavern, and presently one of their number advanced toward the timber carrying a white handkerchief on the end of his saber.

Dick advanced to meet him.

"What do you wish?" he asked, when within a few paces of the man.

"We wish to be allowed to bury our dead and remove our wounded without being fired upon."

"Very well," replied Dick, "your wish is granted."

Without a word the redcoat turned and hastened back to the tavern.

Dick returned to where the "Liberty Boys" were.

He explained what the redcoat wished, and told the



"Liberty Boys" to not fire on the redcoats when they came to get the wounded and bury the dead.

Presently about fifty of the redcoats advanced from the tavern.

Some of these redcoats carried the wounded redcoats to the tavern, while others dug shallow graves with pickaxe and shovel, and buried their dead comrades.

"Now get ready for an attack, boys," said Dick, when this had been completed and the redcoats had returned to the tavern.

The "Liberty Boys" drew their pistols.

They waited and watched, eagerly and patiently.

Five, ten, fifteen minutes passed and the redcoats made no attack.

Another quarter of an hour passed.

Still the redcoats did not make an attack, and presently the sound of galloping horses came to the youths' ears.

The youths looked and saw the redcoats riding away in an easterly direction.

"They're going away, Dick!" exclaimed Bob. "What does it mean?"

"Perhaps it is a trick," said Dick.

### CHAPTER III.

#### THE "LIBERTY BOYS" HELP THEMSELVES.

The "Liberty Boys" watched the retreating redcoats, closely.

If it was a trick they would not be caught in it if they could help it.

The redcoats kept right on going.

They did not pause nor even slacken their speed.

They rode onward until they were only a small, moving spot in the distance.

"I guess they're going back to Philadelphia," said Bob.

"It looks like it," said Mark Morrison; "they're still going."

Dick was now convinced that the redcoats had given up all idea of making another attack.

He did not blame them much.

The attack they had already made had resulted so disastrously that it was no wonder it had cast a damper on them.

Dick and the "Liberty Boys" now made their way to the tavern.

They tied their horses and entered.

Mr. Brinker and his daughter Mary were in the large, front room.

Mary greeted Dick with a smile.

It was evident that the beautiful girl was greatly impressed with the appearance of the handsome, manly leader of the "Liberty Boys."

"Well, Mr. Brinker, the redcoats have gone," said Dick.

"Yes, and I'm glad of it," Mr. Brinker replied, in an apparently hearty tone. "There is one thing I don't like about it, however."

"What is that?"

"They left their wounded on my hands to take care of."

"I supposed they would."

"Yes, there's twelve of them."

"They'll pay you for taking care of them, won't they?"

"Yes; but there's lot of extra trouble in taking care of wounded men."

Dick talked with the tavern-keeper and his daughter a few minutes longer, and then gave the order for the "Liberty Boys" to mount.

They left the tavern, and, mounting their horses, rode away.

They went in an easterly direction over the same road taken by the redcoats.

They rode in this direction perhaps half an hour.

They did not again get sight of the party of redcoats.

Dick decided that they had gone far enough toward Philadelphia.

They turned to the right at the first cross-road and rode a mile or two toward the south.

Then they turned to the right-hand and rode westward.

They visited perhaps a score of farm-houses, but did not encounter any more redcoats.

They kept on in a westerly direction until almost due south from Valley Forge.

Then they turned and rode northward toward the patriot encampment.

"Say, Dick," said Bob, as they rode along, "do you remember that old Tory that lives up here a mile or so? The one that pleaded poverty so strongly when we went there to get some provisions, and then hauled off two loads of produce the next day and sold it to the redcoats in Philadelphia."

"Yes, I remember him, Bob. We will pass right by his house."

"So we will; and, say, I wish we could catch him loading up some wagons; we'd make him take the provisions to Valley Forge instead of to Philadelphia."

"And make him accept Continental currency instead of British gold in payment for the provisions, Bob?"

"Yes."

"That would be rather satisfactory, wouldn't it?"



"It would, for a fact."

A few minutes later the "Liberty Boys" came in sight of the old Tory's house.

The Tory's name was Samuel Muggins.

As the youths drew near the house they saw some men at work in the barnyard.

Two wagons stood near the barn, and the wagons were being filled with all kinds of farm produce.

The "Liberty Boys" were at the gate leading into the barnyard before their presence was discovered.

The reason of this was, probably, because they had approached from the southward.

Valley Forge being to the northward, the Tory had naturally kept a lookout in that direction.

The youths leaped from their horses and tied them to a fence.

Then they opened the gate and poured into the barnyard.

The scraping of the gate on the frozen ground was heard by the Tory and his assistants and they looked around.

The Tory uttered a hoarse cry of dismay.

"The rebels!" he exclaimed. "I am ruined!"

Dick, who was in the front ranks of the "Liberty Boys," approached the Tory and nodded and smiled.

"How are you, Mr. Muggins?" he said.

A grunt, which might have meant anything, was the Tory's reply.

"How much longer will it be before you get the wagons loaded, Mr. Muggins?"

The man glared at Dick.

"I—ah—that is—I don't know that it is any of your business, sir!" he stammered.

"Oh, yes, it is," replied Dick.

He was perfectly calm and unruffled.

The Tory looked worried.

"I don't see why it should be any concern of yours," he said.

"I do. I am anxious for you to get the wagons loaded so that we can accompany you as a guard."

"So that you can accompany me as a guard?"

"Yes."

"I don't want any guard."

"Yes, but you do."

"For what reason?"

"For what reason?"

"Yes."

"Why, to keep the redcoats from capturing your wagons, of course."

The Tory snorted in a disgusted manner.

"There's no danger of that," he said.

"Oh, yes, there is. There are a good many redcoats

scouring the roads in this part of the country and they might head you off and capture you before you get to Valley Forge."

"What's that! Before I get to Valley Forge, did you say?"

The Tory almost shouted the words.

He was red in the face.

The "Liberty Boys" laughed aloud.

They understood what Dick was driving at and the idea of the thing amused them.

Bob, especially, was hugely tickled.

"Oh, say, this is fun, sure enough!" he exclaimed. "Dick, old man, you're all right!"

The Tory evidently did not think Dick was all right, however.

He glared at Dick as if he would like to murder him.

"Certainly I said Valley Forge," remarked Dick, quietly. "Of course that is where you were going to take those provisions?"

"Of course it wasn't where I was going to take them, any such thing!"

The Tory evidently thought that it was as good a plan as any to try to bluff it out.

Dick pretended to be surprised.

"Do you really mean to say that you were not going to take these provisions to Valley Forge?" he asked.

"That is just what I do mean to say!"

"You will find a ready market up there for all your stuff."

"Yes, and I'd have to take my pay in Continental currency."

"Oh, I see," remarked Dick, drily. "You prefer British gold."

"Yes, I do."

"Mr. Muggins," said Dick, slowly and deliberately, "are you aware that there are hundreds of men up in the patriot encampment up at Valley Forge who are suffering from hunger, who are, in fact, almost starving?"

The Tory squirmed slightly.

"I don't know anything about it," in a dogged tone.

"You don't?"

"No."

"I guess you mean that you don't want to know."

The Tory frowned.

"It's nothing to me," he said. "I had nothing to do with getting those men there or with causing the conditions with which they are confronted. They will have to look out for themselves. They cannot expect me to furnish them with food for nothing."

"Then you admit that you were loading up these pro-



visions with the intention of hauling them off to Philadelphia and selling them to the redcoats?"

"I might as well admit it, I guess. I don't know that it would do any good to deny it."

Dick nodded his head.

"You're right about that," he said. "It wouldn't do any good to deny it, for we know that such were your intentions."

The Tory's assistants had stopped working and were standing idly by doing nothing.

Dick now made a gesture toward them.

"Get to work," he ordered. "Finish loading these wagons as quickly as possible."

His tone was peremptory.

The men hesitated and looked inquiringly at Mr. Muggins.

"Never mind looking at him," said Dick; "I am in charge here, now. Get to work! Load up those wagons as quickly as you can."

"That's the way to talk to them, Dick!" cried Bob. "Just say the word and we'll assist them to move quickly by pinking them slightly with the points of our sabers."

Bob drew his saber and flourished it, at the same time looking at the men as if eager for a chance to use the weapon on them.

The Tory's assistants looked frightened.

Mr. Muggins himself looked somewhat alarmed.

He realized that he was helpless.

Whatever the "Liberty Boys" took a notion to do they could do and he could not help himself.

"Put up your saber, Bob," said Dick; "I guess they won't make it necessary for us to use them."

This proved to be the case.

The men went to work without any words.

They loaded corn, wheat, potatoes and all kinds of farm produce into the wagons.

They worked rapidly and soon had the wagons filled.

"Are you going along with us?" asked Dick of Mr. Muggins.

"Where to?"

"To Valley Forge."

The Tory grunted.

"Humph!" he said. "What good would that do?"

"You would be there to receive pay for your produce."

"In Continental currency! Bah! I'd rather give the stuff away, outright, and have done with it."

"All right; much obliged," said Dick, quietly. "If you wish to give the provisions away we will accept them with thanks."

"I don't wish to do so, but I have no choice in the matter.

I cannot help myself. I hope the provisions will choke the men who eat them!"

"I fear you are not very patriotic, Mr. Muggins."

"Bah! I am true to my king."

"You are very foolish, Mr. Muggins; but I suppose there is no use trying to reason with you. I believe that the people of America should be free and independent, but of course you are entitled to your views on the subject the same as I am entitled to mine."

"Yes, sir, I am entitled to my opinion and I intend to keep it as long as I choose."

"Very well, just as you please. I would advise you, however, to be very careful about lending aid and assistance to the British."

An angry grunt was the man's reply.

He did not seem to wish to talk.

Probably he was afraid he would say something that would get him into trouble and decided that it was safest to merely grunt.

"If you will send two of your men along to drive the teams they will return with the teams and wagons as soon as the provisions have been unloaded."

The Tory then gave the order to a couple of men who had been helping to load the wagon, and they took their places on the wagons, ready to do the driving.

Dick gave the order for the start to be made.

The "Liberty Boys" led the way out of the barnyard and untied their horses and mounted them.

About half their number rode on up the road at a slow pace, while the other half waited for the wagons to come out into the road.

When the wagons had emerged from the barnyard and the teams were headed up the road, the party of "Liberty Boys" fell in behind.

As the "Liberty Boys" had to accommodate their speed to that of the wagons, their progress was slow.

It took them more than two hours to reach Valley Forge.

There was great rejoicing in the encampment when they did reach there.

The two wagon-loads of provisions were badly needed.

The wagons were quickly unloaded, and the drivers were told that they might go.

They lost no time in doing so.

While the "Liberty Boys" were eating supper that evening, an orderly entered the cabin in which Dick Slater had his quarters.

"The commander-in-chief wishes to see you at headquarters," he said, addressing Dick.

"Tell him I will be there in a few minutes," the youth replied.



## CHAPTER IV.

## THE TRICKY TAVERN-KEEPER.

"You wish to see me, your excellency?"

Dick stood in the presence of the commander-in-chief, in the latter's room at headquarters.

General Washington nodded.

He indicated a chair.

"Be seated, Dick," he said.

Dick took the seat indicated.

General Washington was silent for a few moments.

He seemed to be thinking.

Presently he turned his eyes upon Dick.

"Dick, my boy," he said, "I have some work for you."

Dick's face brightened.

There was an eager look in his eyes.

"I am glad of it, your excellency," he said. "I was in hopes such would prove to be the case."

The commander-in-chief nodded, approvingly.

"That's the way I like to hear any one talk, Dick," he said. "You never stop to ask what the work is or how difficult it may prove to be. You always say you are ready to attempt it."

"I am always glad to attempt to do any work which may prove to be of value to the great cause," the youth replied.

"I know it, Dick, and that is one reason why I always send for you when I have any especially difficult and dangerous work which I wish done."

This was a compliment and Dick's face showed that he appreciated it.

He waited for the commander-in-chief to tell what it was he wished done.

Presently General Washington spoke.

"Dick," he said, "word has come to me that General Howe is planning to make an attack upon us. Now, this may be true, and it may not. I wish you to go to Philadelphia and find out. If it is not true I wish to know it; and if it is, I wish to find out, if possible, when the attack is to be made, by how large a force and all about it. Do you think you can find this out for me?"

"I will try, your excellency."

"Good! When will you start?"

"At once."

"Very well. There is no need of giving you any further instructions. You may go ahead and do the work in your own way."

"Very well; I will do so," said Dick.

Then he bade the commander-in-chief good-bý, saluted and withdrew.

It did not take Dick long to make preparations for his trip.

He doffed his uniform of blue and donned a rough suit of citizen's clothing.

He told the "Liberty Boys" where he was going and gave them such instructions as he thought necessary.

Then he went out, bridled and saddled his horse, and, mounting, rode away in the gathering darkness.

There being snow on the ground, it was not very dark, and Dick urged his horse to a gallop.

Dick had gone only a mile or so when it began snowing.

At first it did not snow so very hard, but the flakes gradually grew larger and thicker and came down faster and faster.

It was hard work keeping to the road.

It was all right going through the timber, but in the open country, where there were no fences, there was danger of wandering away from the road and getting lost.

Dick let the horse take its own course.

At last, after a ride of perhaps two hours, the horse came to a stop almost right at the very door of a house.

Dick looked closely, and as his eyes took in the faint outlines of the building, he exclaimed:

"It is Brinker's Tavern!"

He knew where he was now.

He decided to stop long enough to get a cup of coffee.

He leaped off his horse, tied the animal to the hitching-post, and, advancing to the tavern, knocked on the door.

The door was opened at once and Dick stepped through the doorway into the room.

Mr. Brinker, who had opened the door, stared at Dick, in amazement.

"Hello!" he exclaimed. "You here? What a surprise! What in the world are you doing out on such a night as this?"

"Oh, I'm out on kind of a pleasure trip," laughed Dick.

The landlord laughed in his turn, but at the same time he looked at Dick, keenly.

"I'm afraid you're not getting much pleasure out of it," he said.

"Oh, yes, I like snow."

"So much of it as we are getting to-night?"

"Oh, I could do with a little less. By the way, friend Brinker, can you give me a cup of coffee?"

"In just a few minutes, Dick. Just step into the dining-room and sit down; you won't have to wait long."

Dick sat down in front of the fireplace and gave utterance to a sigh of contentment.

"I will come into the dining-room when the coffee is ready, Mr. Brinker," he said.



"All right," the tavern-keeper replied.

He hastened out of the room, and, passing through the dining-room, entered the kitchen.

His daughter Mary was there.

She was washing some dishes.

"Have we any hot coffee, Mary?" her father asked.

"Yes, father; do you want some?" was the reply.

"No."

"Who does want it, then?"

"Dick Slater."

The girl gave a start.

"Dick Slater!" she exclaimed.

"Yes."

"Is he here?"

The girl's tone was eager.

Her father nodded.

"Yes," he said, "he is here."

"When did he come?"

"He just got here."

There was a pleased look on the girl's face, but her father did not observe it.

He was thinking about something else.

The truth of the matter was that while professing to be a patriot, the tavern-keeper was in reality a Tory.

He hastened to pour a cup of coffee.

Then he turned to his daughter.

"Go and get some bread, Mary," he said. "Get some cheese, too. Perhaps the young man may want something to eat."

The girl hastened into a pantry at one side of the kitchen.

As soon as the girl had disappeared her father drew a little vial from his pocket.

"A few drops of this will put him into a sound sleep," he said to himself.

Then, with a cautious glance toward the pantry, he dropped several drops out of the vial and into the coffee.

The tavern-keeper did not see his daughter, but she saw him.

Something in her father's actions had caused her to be suspicious.

She was watching him through the crack of the partially open door.

The girl was startled.

"I wonder what father can mean by that?" she asked herself. "Surely he isn't intending to poison Dick?"

The tavern-keeper's reason for putting the sleeping potion in Dick's coffee was, to his mind, an all-sufficient one.

He knew that General Howe, the British commander-in-

chief, stationed at Philadelphia, had offered five hundred pounds for the capture of Dick Slater, the patriot spy.

He had suddenly made up his mind to put Dick to sleep, make him a prisoner and then on the morrow take him to Philadelphia, deliver him into the hands of General Howe and receive the reward.

He would probably have succeeded but for his daughter Mary.

She had fallen in love with Dick, and was determined that no harm should come to him.

She emerged from the pantry, bringing some bread and cheese.

As she laid the bread and cheese on the table beside the cup of coffee, she simulated a start and inclined her head as if listening.

"I think I hear one of the injured soldiers calling, father," she said. "Will you go see what he wants, or shall I?"

"I'll go, Mary. You take the coffee and bread and cheese into the dining-room and call Dick."

"Very well, father."

Feeling sure that he had fixed things, Mr. Brinker left the kitchen and hastened toward the room occupied by the wounded redcoats.

The instant her father was out of the room, Mary emptied the coffee out of the cup, rinsed the cup thoroughly and then refilled it.

Then she carried the coffee, bread and cheese into the dining-room and placed it on the table.

This done, she went to the door opening from the dining-room into the big, front room.

"Your coffee is ready, Dick," she said.

"Ah, is it you, Mary?" said Dick, rising and approaching the girl. "I am glad to see you."

The girl looked pleased.

"Yes, it is I, Dick, and I am glad to see you, too. But why are you out on such a terrible night?"

"I go when duty calls, Mary."

The girl conducted the youth into the dining-room and to the table upon which she had placed the coffee, bread and cheese.

Dick seated himself.

He ate some of the bread and cheese and drank the coffee.

"This coffee is fine," he said. "May I have another cup, Mary?"

"Yes, indeed."

The girl took the cup and hastened into the kitchen.

She refilled the cup, and, returning, placed it on the table beside Dick.



Mr. Brinker entered the dining-room as Dick was drinking the last of the second cup of coffee.

"Good!" the man thought. "He will soon be sound asleep. This will be a good night's work for me. Two thousand five hundred dollars doesn't grow on every bush."

Presently Dick rose from the table and returned to the large, front room.

"Sit down and take it easy, Dick," said Mr. Brinker. "By the way, hadn't you better stay all night with us?"

Dick shook his head.

"No," he said, "I must go on my way, and I must be going soon, too."

Mr. Brinker fidgeted uneasily.

He was afraid Dick would start out before the sleeping potion had time to do its work.

"You're liable to get lost, Dick," he said; "and in that case you would lose more time than if you were to stay here over night."

"Oh, I don't think there is any danger that I will get lost."

"You are going to Philadelphia, Dick?" the man asked.

"Yes, that is where I am headed for."

Then Dick rose to his feet.

"I must be going," he said. "It is not right for me to sit in here by a warm fire while my horse is standing out in the cold, exposed to the snow and storm."

Mr. Brinker was very ill at ease.

He did not wish Dick to start.

He wished to keep Dick there until the sleeping potion which he supposed the youth had taken with his coffee had had time to get in its work, when, of course, Dick would be unable to go.

"Talk to him, Mary; don't let him go," he whispered, in his daughter's ear. "Keep him a while longer."

Knowing that no harm would come to Dick as a result, the girl was not at all loth to obey her father, and she entered into conversation with Dick, with the result that he was delayed several minutes.

At last he turned toward the door, however, and said:

"I must be going. I have already tarried here too long."

At the same instant there came a thunderous knocking at the door.

Then a loud, imperious voice was heard.

"Open, in the name of the king!"

## CHAPTER V.

### A DUEL WITH SABERS.

Mary Brinker looked startled.

So did her father, for that matter.

Mr. Brinker realized the fact that if the British soldiers should enter and find Dick there, and should succeed in capturing him, they would take him to General Howe and secure the reward.

This would leave the tavern-keeper, figuratively speaking, out in the cold.

Therefore, when the girl caught Dick by the arm and said, "Come away, come out of the room at once!" her father approved of this course.

"Go, Dick," he said in a low, excited tone; "you must not be caught here."

To one not knowing differently, it would have seemed as if the feeling which inspired the tavern-keeper was solicitude for Dick's welfare.

"I'll go out the back way," said Dick, "and will come around to the front, mount my horse and ride onward on my journey."

"Come, quick," said Mary.

She started to lead the way from the room.

Dick turned to follow.

At that instant the door opened.

Six British soldiers entered the room.

"Hold!" cried the leader of the redcoats, pointing toward Dick. "Who are you, and where are you going?"

Dick half turned and faced the redcoats.

"I don't know that it is any of your business," he said, quietly. "I will say, however, that I am a guest of this tavern."

"Oho! You're a little bit saucy, aren't you?"

The leader of the redcoats was a big, dark-faced fellow.

He was a typical specimen of a type of men who are continually looking for trouble.

"No, not saucy," replied Dick, "I am simply telling the truth."

Dick made a movement as if to leave the room.

"Hold!" the man cried. "Don't be in a hurry. Do not attempt to leave this room till I give you permission to do so."

"And who are you, that you should presume to give such orders?" asked Dick. "You are acting in rather a high-handed manner, I think!"

"It doesn't matter what you think. And as for who I am, I will say that I am a man who will see to it that his orders are obeyed."

Something in the fellow's air rasped on Dick's feelings terribly.

The youth felt his anger rising until it was impossible for him to keep silent.

"You are not a man!" he said, in a cold, hard voice.

"You are a big, blustering bully and coward!"



"What is that!"

The fellow almost shouted the words.

His dark face grew darker still.

It took on a look that would have become the face of a demon.

He leaped forward a pace and glared at Dick in a ferocious manner.

"Do you dare speak to me!—me, Spencer Morgan, the most dangerous man in the British army, in such a manner!" he cried, as if unwilling to believe his ears. "Great guns! but I will kill you for that. I will spit you on the end of my saber as if you were a chicken!"

A little cry of fear escaped Mary Brinker.

Her father looked alarmed, also.

If the redcoats should kill Dick, there would be no chance of getting a reward from General Howe.

Dick did not seem to be alarmed, however.

He looked the big fellow in the eyes, unflinchingly.

"Your talk and actions simply prove that what I said is true," said Dick, coldly and calmly. "Only a bully and a coward would threaten an unarmed man. If I had a saber you would not talk so bravely."

A sudden look of fiendish delight flashed into the redcoat's eyes.

Dick saw it and knew what it meant.

He knew what the next words of the man would be before he spoke them.

He would order one of his comrades to give Dick a saber; then, under the guise of a duel, he would kill the youth.

Dick had interpreted the look in the man's eyes correctly.

The redcoat gave utterance to a harsh laugh.

"Ho, ho, ho! Listen to the young bantam talk. What do you know of the use of a saber?"

"Enough to teach you a lesson, perhaps."

Dick's tone and air were cool and calm.

There was a peculiar air of confidence and self-possession about Dick which would have been a warning to most people, but not so to this redcoat.

He was so egotistic and had such o'er-weening confidence in his own abilities that he thought he would have no trouble at all in disposing of Dick.

He turned to one of his comrades.

"Lend that insolent young fellow your saber," he ordered.

"It will take me but a few minutes to finish him, and then you can have your saber back again."

The man addressed drew his saber, and, reversing it, stepped forward and held it out to Dick.

The youth accepted it, with a bow.

"Thank you," he said, politely. "When I have taught this bravo comrade of yours a much-needed lesson, I will return your blade to you."

A snarl of anger escaped Spencer Morgan.

"You insolent young scoundrel!" he grated. "It is I who will teach you a lesson, and I will do it very quickly. Dick's lip curled.

"Do you know what I think will happen?" he asked in a calm, deliberate tone of voice.

"I can't say that I do. What?"

"I think that after we have crossed blades, and I have proven myself your master and you see that you are getting the worst of it, you will prove that my estimate of you as being a bully and coward is a correct estimate, by calling upon your comrades to come to your aid."

A hoarse growl of rage escaped the redcoat.

"What is that!" he almost yelled. "Do you mean to say that I would call for help?"

"I mean to say that you will do so. I will venture to say that you will bellow like a good fellow."

There was not the least air of bravado about Dick.

He was simply calm, cool and confident.

Taking hold of the point of the saber with his left hand and holding to the hilt with the right, he tested the weapon.

A saber has a rather short, stout blade.

Yet, to the surprise of the redcoats who were watching him closely, Dick bent the weapon two or three inches out of true.

More, he seemed to do it without much effort.

The redcoats knew that only a person gifted with unusual strength could perform the feat.

Even Spencer Morgan was surprised and looked somewhat impressed.

He was aware of the fact that the youth had done something which even he could not do.

The redcoat who had lent Dick the saber placed his mouth close to Spencer Morgan's ear and said, in a whisper.

"That young fellow is dangerous, Spencer; you will have to look out for him."

"Bah!" replied Morgan. "He is strong, that is all; he probably knows nothing regarding the use of the saber."

There was a troubled look in the fellow's face, however, which showed that he did not have full confidence that his statement was correct.

Dick now stepped forward and took up a position near the centre of the room.

The redcoat advanced and took up a position in front of Dick.

Dick looked the fellow straight in the eyes.



"Get ready to call on your friends to help you," said the youth, calmly.

A cry of rage escaped the redcoat.

"Curse you!" he hissed. "I shall not call on my comrades for help; a dozen such fellows as you could not make necessary for me to do so."

Dick smiled, coldly.

"You think not?" he remarked.

"I know it!"

"You mean you think you know it."

There was something in Dick's tone which made the redcoat very angry.

Dick's air and tone were so calm and cold as to be very tantalizing, indeed.

A hoarse growl escaped the redcoat.

"Oh, guard!" he cried. "Look out for yourself, you insolent puppy!"

Dick threw himself into position.

He did so so gracefully, and his position was so correct, that the redcoats realized in an instant that the youth knew something about handling a sword.

They were right about this.

Dick was a fine swordsman.

When they had nothing else to do, he and Bob were almost constantly practising with their sabers.

Both had become experts.

So expert indeed were the youths that often when they were practising the patriot soldiers would gather around by the hundreds to watch them.

The youths' friendly contests were, often, enough to make the spectators' hair stand on end.

The contests looked like real combats.

Indeed, a slip on the part of either or a failure to make the proper guard would often have resulted in one or the other being severely wounded.

They were so confident of themselves, however, and were withal so skillful that they never so much as inflicted a flesh wound on each other.

This will show that the redcoat, Morgan, had a hard task before him in trying to overcome Dick.

He was soon to learn that this was the case.

He made a fierce lunge at the youth.

The saber was turned aside with the utmost ease.

Dick did not move his body a particle.

Indeed, he seemed to scarcely move his sword-arm.

Yet the blade of the redcoat was turned aside, and Dick stood quietly there, untouched, a cool, tantalizing smile on his handsome face.

Spencer Morgan was greatly surprised.

This feat of Dick's opened his eyes to the fact that in Dick he had a foeman worthy of his best efforts.

He realized now that he was up against a trained, expert swordsman.

Still he did not think that Dick could be his equal.

He was larger and heavier than the youth, and should be able to overcome him without great difficulty.

He decided to make as short work of it as possible.

To this end he attacked Dick, fiercely.

Dick was prepared, however.

He met the attack with such skill as to surprise the spectators.

So furious was the onset of the redcoat that Dick gave way, slightly.

He did it not because he had to, but in order that he might make the proper defence with more ease to himself.

The manner in which he handled the saber was a revelation.

The redcoats had never seen anything like it.

The weapons flashed hither and thither with the speed of the lightning's flash.

No matter where the redcoat's saber might be, Dick's saber was there, interposing.

It seemed as if Dick was incased by walls of steel.

Try as he would, Spencer Morgan could not find an opening.

To do the redcoat justice, he was a good swordsman.

He was far above the average.

It is doubtful if, with the exception of Bob, there was another person in the patriot army who could have held his own with this redcoat.

Thanks to unremitting practice, however, and also doubtless to natural talent, Dick was more than able to hold his own.

Good swordsman though the redcoat was, Dick was his superior.

He soon demonstrated this fact.

It did not take the redcoat long to partially exhaust himself as a result of the fury of his attack.

He presently stopped attacking and fell back a pace.

It was now Dick's turn.

The youth did not seem tired, at all.

He seemed to be made of steel.

He assumed the offensive.

He pressed forward and began a vigorous attack.

The manner in which he handled the saber was wonderful.

The weapon flashed hither and thither, in and out, with such bewildering rapidity as to almost daze Dick's opponent.



The fellow defended himself as best he could.

He was almost winded, however, while Dick was seemingly as fresh and strong as ever; and it was soon patent to the onlookers that the youth had his opponent at his mercy.

Dick could have cut the redcoat down, but did not wish to do so.

His purpose was to humiliate the fellow and disarm him.

Besides, if he were to kill the redcoat the fellow's comrades would at once attack him, and Dick did not wish to have to engage in a fight with the fellows.

Dick pressed the redcoat hard, and finally seizing upon a favorable opportunity he struck Morgan's blade a strong blow and knocked it out of the fellow's hands.

Instantly a wild cry of terror went up from Spencer Morgan.

"Help, boys; don't let him kill me!" he cried, in accents of terror.

He leaped back with the evident intention of sheltering himself behind his comrades.

A cold smile curled Dick's lip.

"What did I tell you!" he said. "There is the bully and coward for you. When they think they have everything their own way they are very brave, indeed, but when things go against them and they are getting the worst of it they lose no time in yelling for help. You need not be afraid, however, Spencer Morgan; I never yet struck an unarmed foe, and I would not have your blood on my hands for the wealth of a kingdom."

A look of great relief appeared on Spencer Morgan's face.

There was also the look of a demon there.

Anger, hate, discomfiture, baffled rage, all were pictured on the redcoat's face.

Dick stepped forward and handed the saber back to its owner.

"Thank you," he said.

Then Dick turned toward the landlord and his daughter. He gave them a significant look.

"I will now go to my room, if you please."

At this instant a wild cry of terror escaped Mary Brinker.

"Take care, Dick!"

Dick whirled, quick as a flash.

As he did so he saw Spencer Morgan standing with leveled pistol in hand.

It all flashed through Dick's mind in an instant.

The redcoat, angry because of his defeat and humiliation at Dick's hands, had seized the opportunity and as soon as Dick's back was turned had drawn a pistol, with the evident intention of shooting Dick down.

Crack!

Spencer Morgan had fired.

## CHAPTER VI.

### HELD UP AT THE FORD.

Dick saw the movement in time, however.

He made a quick movement sideways.

Of course it would be impossible to dodge a bullet, if the bullet has left the weapon.

A quick movement, just as the person holding weapon starts to pull the trigger, however, will often enable the person aimed at to escape the bullet.

It was so in Dick's case.

He moved aside quickly just as Spencer Morgan started to pull the trigger.

The result was that the bullet did not strike Dick.

This attempt to assassinate him angered Dick.

He leaped forward, with the bound of a panther.

None of the other redcoats made a movement to interfere with Dick.

Doubtless they did not approve of the action of the comrade.

Spencer Morgan made an attempt to draw another pistol.

He did not have time to do so, however.

Dick was upon him too quickly.

The youth's arm shot out.

His fist took the redcoat fairly between the eyes.

Dick was angry and struck hard.

The redcoat went down as if he had been struck by a sledgehammer.

He struck the floor with a crash.

The shock of the blow and the jar from striking the floor so hard knocked the redcoat senseless.

Dick did not look at Spencer Morgan after the fellow fell.

He turned quickly and faced the other redcoats.

He eyed them sternly and unflinchingly.

"Do you approve of the action of your comrade?" Dick asked.

"I can't say that I do," said one, shaking his head.

"Nor I."

"I don't approve of it."

"Neither do I."

"It was no way to do."

Thus spoke the redcoats.

They all seemed to be fair-minded fellows, with the exception of Morgan.



"Very well; I am glad you look at it that way," said Dick, quietly.

Then Dick turned and walked over to where Mary and her father stood.

"I guess I will be going now," he said.

Mr. Brinker eyed Dick as closely as he could without attracting the youth's attention.

He could not understand how it was that Dick had not succumbed to the drug which he thought the youth had drank with the coffee.

"You had better stay all night with us," he said. "It's a terrible night out."

"Oh, I don't mind the weather," said Dick; "I will be going."

He gave Mary his hand.

Then he shook hands with her father.

"Good-by," he said.

Then he walked to the door, opened it, and stepped out into the night and storm.

It was still snowing.

Not so hard as it had been, however, Dick was sure.

Dick went to where he had left his horse, and, untying the halter-strap, patted him on the neck.

"Poor old fellow! It is treating you shabbily to leave you out in the storm in this fashion. Well, you will soon get warmed up when we get going again."

The horse whinnied.

Dick brushed the snow off the saddle, and, mounting, rode away in the direction of Philadelphia.

He rode at a leisurely pace.

He did not consider that there was any need of haste.

Besides, the snow was so deep that it would have been hard on the horse to travel rapidly.

Dick rode steadily onward for perhaps an hour.

Then he came to the timber which bordered the Schuylkill River.

Dick followed the winding road and at last reached the river at a point where there was a ford.

At this point the water was shallow and flowed rapidly.

As a result the river was not frozen over.

Dick rode into the water.

He rode slowly onward until nearly across the river.

Then he was given quite a start.

A loud, threatening voice suddenly called out:

"Halt! Stay where you are until you have given an account of yourself!"

Dick was within perhaps fifteen yards of the shore.

Timber grew right down to the water's edge.

The man who had uttered the words given above was concealed in the edge of the timber.

Not knowing how many might be concealed there, Dick decided that discretion would be the better part of valor, and brought his horse to a stop.

"Sensible man," said the voice. "You are wise in obeying orders."

"Who are you, and what do you want?" asked Dick.

"Who are we?"

"Yes."

"That is for you to find out, my friend;" with a chuckling laugh. "You will pardon me, I know, if I say that it is your place to answer questions, not to ask them."

"Oh, all right!" replied Dick, shortly. "If you have any questions to ask, however, ask them quickly before my horse freezes fast in the river."

"Oh, well, as you are only one, while we are a dozen, you may come ashore."

"Thank you."

Dick immediately urged his horse forward.

As soon as he reached the shore a dozen men appeared in the road.

They surrounded Dick.

Dick saw at once that they were redcoats.

At any rate, they wore British uniforms.

"Now, a few questions," one of the men said. "First, who are you?"

"My name is Tom Jones," replied Dick, giving the first name that popped into his mind.

"Tom Jones, eh?"

"Yes."

"That's a good, plain name. Now, Tom, what are you, Whig or Tory?"

"I can't say that I am either."

"If you are not a Whig or Tory, then what are you?"

"I'm a neutral."

"A neutral, eh?"

"Yes. My father is a neutral, and what is good enough for him is good enough for me."

"Oh, your father's a neutral, is he?"

"Yes."

"Where does your father live?"

"A couple of miles back from the river."

"Humph! What are you doing out at this time of night, and where are you going?"

"I'm going to Philadelphia."

"What for?"

"A doctor."

"A doctor?"

"Yes; my father is sick. He is very sick, and I hope that you will not delay me here any longer."

"All right, we won't delay you. The fact of the matter-



is, we are on our way to Philadelphia ourselves, and we will accompany you. Wait just a moment till we get our horses."

"All right, if you insist," said Dick. "But as I know the way to Philadelphia, and as every minute is precious, I don't see why I should be made to wait."

"Well, go along, if you wish to. We'll overtake you."

"All right! thank you."

The men scattered to get their horses, and the road being clear, Dick rode onward.

As the leader of the redcoats was hastening toward where his horse was tied, one of his comrades stepped up beside him and said:

"Say, I believe I know that young fellow."

The leader looked at his comrade in surprise.

"You believe you know him?" he asked.

"Yes."

"Who is he?"

"I believe he is Dick Slater, the rebel spy!"

A cry of amazement escaped the other.

"Dick Slater, the rebel spy, you say?"

"Yes."

"Then why didn't you say so before?"

"I wasn't sure of it."

"Are you sure of it now?"

"I am confident he is Dick Slater. I got a good look at his face as he passed me just now, and I don't think that I can be mistaken."

The redcoat leader was all excitement.

"Quick! Mount your horses!" he cried out in a loud voice. "That young fellow is Dick Slater, the rebel spy! After him! We must capture him. If we can do so and take him to General Howe, it will be five hundred pounds in our pockets."

Dick heard what the redcoat leader said.

It was a still night, and the words came to his ears distinctly.

"So!" exclaimed Dick to himself. "I wonder how they found out who I am. Some one must have recognized me just as I was riding away. Well, let them come. I have a good horse and will lead them a merry chase."

Then he patted his horse on the neck.

"On, Major!" he cried. "Forward, old boy. Show those redcoats what mettle you are made of."

The horse responded instantly.

He leaped forward and dashed away through the falling snow at a swift pace.

At the same instant wild yells from the redcoats came to Dick's ears.

## CHAPTER VII.

### CHASED TO PHILADELPHIA.

Major was a splendid animal.

He was not a common horse by any means.

Arabian blood flowed in his veins.

He was a magnificent animal, was very swift, and his splendid staying qualities.

Dick had captured Major from the British, when the redcoats occupied Long Island.

He had had Major ever since.

The horse had carried him safely through many dangers and out of many tight places.

Dick had never yet found a horse that was Major's equal in speed.

He did not expect to find the equal of Major among the horses of the pursuing redcoats.

Dick was not worried.

He had been chased many times.

It was such an old story that he had become used to it.

Still, as it would be necessary for him to get a considerable lead before Philadelphia was reached, it would require hard riding.

Dick patted Major on the neck.

"Good old boy," he said; "I am sorry that you will have to exert yourself, but when we reach Philadelphia you shall have a warm stall in a good stable and be well taken care of."

The horse whinnied as if he understood what was said.

The race was now on in earnest.

The road crooked and turned so much that Dick could not see his pursuers, but he could hear them yell.

Presently Dick emerged from the timber into the open country.

The road was now straight.

Dick had been over the road before and knew the way to Philadelphia.

Occasionally he looked back.

It was light enough so that he could see quite distinctly, but the snow was falling so thick and fast that he could see only a short distance.

The redcoats were not close enough for him to see them.

An occasional yell from them apprised him of the fact that they were still giving chase, however.

Dick had good ears and he noted the fact that the yells grew fainter and fainter.

"I am pulling away from them," he said to himself, "and I think that I shall be able to reach Philadelphia far enough



advance so that the redcoats will not be able to get back of me."

Three-quarters of an hour later Dick rode into the outskirts of Philadelphia.

He could not see anything of the redcoats.

He had not heard a yell from them for some time.

Dick felt safe so far as they were concerned.

The danger was more apt to be in the front now than the rear.

Dick rode onward down into the city.

For the purpose of throwing his pursuers entirely off the track, Dick turned down several side streets, making turns first to the right and then to the left.

Presently he paused in front of a livery stable.

Entering, he asked if they would keep his horse there for a day or two.

The livery-stable man said, yes, and Dick turned Major over to him.

"Give my horse feed, water and a good rub-down," said Dick. "I have ridden him far and fast, and traveling is anything but easy to-night."

"Very well, sir," the livery-stable man replied. "I will take good care of your horse, sir."

Dick left the livery stable and made his way up the street. He was soon on the main street of the city.

It was not yet late.

The majority of the shops and stores were still open.

Prior to the occupation of the city by the British the shop-keepers had been in the habit of closing early; but since the arrival of the redcoats the shop-keepers had fallen in the habit of keeping open late so as to get as much British gold as possible from the soldiers, who promenaded up and down the streets each night till midnight.

Dick did not expect to be able to do much on this night.

He decided to put in the time, however.

By entering the saloons and barrooms of the taverns and listening to the talk of the redcoats, he might be able to learn something of value.

Dick entered the first saloon he came to.

He found himself in a large barroom.

At one side was a bar, while scattered around over the floor were a number of small tables.

Farther back toward the rear of the room were several smaller compartments divided off by partitions, reaching perhaps halfway to the ceiling.

These compartments were intended for private drinking parties.

Two or three of them had occupants, judging from the sound of talk and laughter which issued from them.

Seated around the small tables in the large room were many redcoats and a few men in citizen's clothing.

These latter were, of course, Tories.

The fact was that there were very few citizens of Philadelphia remaining there who were not Tories.

The Whig citizens had fled from the city when the redcoats had first appeared.

No one seemed to notice Dick, particularly.

He was glad of this.

He did not wish to be recognized.

He had pulled his hat well down over his face so as to shield it from observation, partially, at least.

He did not know but that there might be some one present who had seen him before and would recognize him.

As a further disguise, Dick simulated a state of partial intoxication.

He made his way across the barroom in a zig-zag fashion.

He staggered and lurched, and once or twice came very near falling against some of the redcoats seated at the tables.

He finally got across the room, however, and dropped into a chair which stood with its back to the partition dividing one of the small rooms from the main room.

Dick found, to his satisfaction, that he could hear the talk of not only those seated around him at the tables, but of the inmates of the little room as well.

The soldiers seated at the table were talking and laughing, boisterously, but their conversation was on subjects which had no interest for him.

He caught a few words spoken by some one within the little room, however, and these proved to be of interest.

"Do you think General Howe intends to move against the rebels up at Valley Forge, this winter?" were the words which Dick heard.

Dick listened, eagerly.

He strained his hearing to the utmost.

He wished to make sure of hearing the reply.

It came at once.

"No," said a voice. "I don't think he intends doing anything of the kind."

"You don't?"

"I do not."

"Don't you think he is missing a good opportunity by not doing so?"

"I think so."

"It would be no job at all to defeat Washington's army if all I hear is true. As I understand it, he has a mere handful of men as compared with our force."

"You're right; and they are poorly armed, half clothed and more than half starved."



"Yes, and I hear that hundreds of them are absolutely barefooted."

"I guess that is the case."

"Then General Howe must certainly be losing the opportunity of a lifetime by not sending our army out there and putting an end to the war at one stroke."

"Maybe he doesn't want to put an end to it," said another voice.

"Why shouldn't he want to do so?"

"Why?"

"Yes, why?"

"Oh, there are reasons."

"Name some of them."

"Well, for one thing, he is enjoying himself here this winter to the fullest extent. It is one round of merriment, sixteen hours out of the twenty-four."

"So it is; and General Howe likes that sort of thing."

"He certainly does; and I must acknowledge that I do, too."

"So do we all; and for my part I am quite willing General Howe should remain in Philadelphia, take it easy and refrain from attacking the rebel army."

"So am I."

"And I."

"By the way, have you heard the latest?"

"No; what is it?"

"I understand that the rebels have a military instructor up at Valley Forge."

"A military instructor!"

It sounded to Dick as if two voices exclaimed this in unison.

"Yes, a military instructor."

Then came the sound of laughter.

The idea of the rebels trying to learn military tactics seemed to amuse the men greatly.

"Who is their military instructor?" asked one of the voices.

"If what I hear is true he is a good one."

"His name?"

"Baron von Steuben."

"Ah! A Dutchman."

"Yes, he's from Germany. He is a veteran soldier, however, and learned the art of war under Frederick of Prussia."

"Oh, no doubt he is able to teach the rebel soldiers a great deal, but I shouldn't think they would be in any condition to practice drilling. Half of them are barefooted, didn't you say?"

"Yes; but, by Jove! they get out and drill, just the same."

"What! Barefooted and in the snow?"

"Yes, barefooted and in the snow—at least so I have been informed."

There were murmurs from the men, seemingly of mingled surprise and admiration.

"I'll tell you one thing," said one.

"What is it?" from another.

"It is this: That I don't see much hope for British success when we are opposed to such men as those—men who will suffer as they are suffering, who will go half-clad and with less than half enough to eat, who will consent to remain parted from their families and loved ones, and who, on top of all this, will get out barefooted in the snow and go through drill practice for the purpose of learning how to fight. That these men will achieve their independence, is, to my mind, merely a question of time."

"Bravo!" said Dick to himself. "Your head is certainly level, even though you are a redcoat."

The man's speech seemed to have made an impression on his companions, also.

"By Jove! I don't know but you are right," said one.

"That's right," from another. "I hadn't thought of that."

"Do you suppose General Howe knows about this matter?"

"I don't know."

"If he doesn't, he ought to."

"So he ought."

"Yes; it is another reason why he should attack the rebel army this winter. If he allows this thing to go on and lets that Dutchman have free sway, those rebels will be good soldiers by spring and will be a hard crowd to whip."

"That's right; they are bad enough in an untrained, undisciplined condition."

There was silence in the little room for a few moments, during which time the inmates were evidently indulging in liquid refreshments.

Dick wondered how these redcoats had learned so much.

How had they become possessed of the knowledge of Baron von Steuben's presence at Valley Forge?

These were questions which Dick asked himself, but for which he could find no answer.

"It looks as if there has been a spy at Valley Forge," he said to himself.

Dick was glad of one thing, however.

If these men knew what they were talking about, and the probabilities were that they did, General Howe was not intending to make an attack upon the patriot army at Valley Forge.



This was what Dick had come to Philadelphia for.

If the information was reliable, Dick's work was already accomplished, but he must find out whether or not it was reliable before returning to Valley Forge.

Dick wished that he might get to see the men whose conversation he had overheard.

He wished to know whether or not they were officers.

If they were officers, the statements which they had made would undoubtedly be reliable.

If, however, they should prove to be common soldiers, Dick would be unwilling to accept their statements as facts, as he knew it would likely be guesswork on their part.

His wish was soon to be gratified.

The noise of chairs being pushed back was heard.

Then came the sound of trampling feet.

Then Dick heard the door of the little room open.

"They're coming out!" he thought. "Now I'll get a chance to see them."

Dick did not change his position, as he did not know who might be watching him.

He could turn his eyes without turning his head, and as the men emerged from the little room, Dick got a good look at them.

There were three of the men and they were officers.

As Dick's eyes rested upon the leader of the trio he was given quite a start.

The man was Captain Parks, an old-time enemy of Dick's, and the youth knew him well.

Captain Parks knew Dick well, also, and that he had a good memory for faces was quickly proven, for his eyes, in roving about the room, rested for an instant upon Dick. He gave a start and cried:

"Dick Slater, the rebel spy, by all that is wonderful!"

## CHAPTER VIII.

### INTO A TRAP.

Dick saw that he was in for it.

Captain Parks was not a man who could be fooled.

Dick knew it would be useless to try to hide his identity. Knowing this, Dick acted instantly.

He came to his feet and seized the chair upon which he had been sitting, and threw it with all his might straight at Captain Parks.

The worthy captain gave utterance to a cry of dismay. He saw the chair coming and tried to dodge it.

As he did so his foot slipped and he started to fall.

The chair struck him on the shoulder and down went the captain, with a crash.

Without waiting an instant Dick leaped forward and dashed toward the door.

All the redcoats in the barroom were on their feet.

They had leaped up the instant that Captain Parks had called out who Dick was.

There was not one among them who had not heard of Dick Slater, the patriot spy.

They had heard many stories of his daring and prowess.

The mention of his name, therefore, was sufficient to arouse and excite them in an instant.

As Dick started toward the door a number of the redcoats made a move as if to get in front of him.

The majority of them were more or less intoxicated, however, and they did not move as quickly as they otherwise might have been able to do.

On the other hand, Dick's actions were as quick as a flash of lightning.

He went across the room with swift bounds, and as he did so he drew a couple of pistols.

He flourished them, threateningly.

"Back!" he cried. "The first man who attempts to touch me will get a bullet through his brains!"

Dick's tone was fierce.

So also was his expression.

Several of the redcoats, who would have been able to get in front of him, suddenly changed their minds about doing so and hastened to get back out of the way.

Dick's reputation as being a daring and dangerous youth was of great use to him now.

The redcoats were confident that he would keep his word.

They were sure that if they got in the way they would get a bullet in their brains.

One or two of the redcoats, in their haste to get out of the way, fell over chairs and went sprawling on the floor.

One fellow, in trying to save himself from a fall, caught hold of the edge of a table and pulled it over on top of himself.

It was a scene of confusion.

In the midst of it all, Dick was about the only one who did not lose his head.

He knew just what he was doing.

Captain Parks scrambled to his feet as quickly as possible, but by the time he did so Dick was almost to the door.

The captain was excited and angry.

He had been jarred considerably by the impact of the chair and the force of the fall.

His dignity had received a shock, also.

The idea that he, Captain Parks, should be knocked



down by a chair thrown by a "rebel" was anything but pleasing to him.

He whipped out a pistol the instant he was on his feet.

"Halt!" he cried, loudly and fiercely. "Halt, or I will put a bullet through you!"

But Dick did not halt.

He was willing to risk a shot from the captain rather than allow himself to be captured.

He would be tried as a spy and hanged, or shot, anyway, so it would be foolish to stop.

Crack!

Captain Parks had fired.

Spat!

The bullet whistled past Dick's ear and struck the door. It was a close call.

A miss is as good as a mile, however, and the closeness of the shot did not worry Dick a particle.

He gave the matter no thought whatever.

The bullet had missed him and that was sufficient.

The next instant his hand was upon the door-knob.

He jerked the door open and leaped out onto the sidewalk.

A squad of redcoats happened to be passing at that moment.

Dick was going with such impetus that he could not check himself quickly enough and the result was that he plunged headlong in among the redcoats.

At the same instant the voice of Captain Parks was heard, crying:

"Stop him! Don't let him get away! He is Dick Slater, the rebel spy! Ten pounds to the man that captures him!"

The redcoats heard and understood.

Two or three of them seized hold of Dick.

Dick had thrust his pistols back into his belt before opening the door and plunging out, so both hands were now free for use.

He used them, too.

He gave the redcoats a surprise such as they were not expecting.

The instant he felt their hands grasping him he threw the hands off.

He began striking out, right and left.

Biff! bang! whack! whack!

Dick leaped hither and thither and struck out so swiftly that the redcoats were unable either to do anything to the youth or to keep themselves from being hit.

Dick in action, in such a case as this, was a veritable human cyclone.

Down, one after another, went the redcoats.

The majority of them had been drinking, which made them easier victims.

Dick realized that he had but little time to spare.

Captain Parks and the other redcoats would be out of the barroom in a very few moments.

By the time Dick had knocked down five or six of the redcoats a quick glance showed him that his enemies were issuing from the barroom.

They would be upon him in another moment.

Dick did not wait, however.

He leaped away and ran down the street at a rapid pace.

Captain Parks was out of the barroom by this time.

He was angry and excited.

"Stop him!" he cried. "Don't let him get away. After him, everybody! Ten pounds to the man who catches him!"

The redcoats set out down the street in pursuit.

Some of the fellows were very good runners.

None were the equal of Dick, however.

He was a very speedy runner.

He had proven this on many occasions.

Dick turned down the first side street he came to.

He followed this street a block and turned again.

After him came the redcoats.

They still managed to keep him in sight.

They yelled and made so much noise that they attracted considerable attention.

Parties of redcoats were coming and going on the streets constantly and Dick was liable to run into a party at any moment.

Dick realized this and made up his mind to distance his pursuers at the earliest possible moment.

To this end he increased his speed.

He ran with all his might.

Presently that which Dick feared might happen did happen.

As he went running down the street he saw quite a large party of redcoats approaching.

Dick would meet them at about the middle of the block.

He did not wish to turn back, as that would enable his pursuers to draw near to him.

Dick felt sure that he knew how he could avoid the approaching redcoats.

There was an alley at the middle of the block.

He would turn down the alley and cross over to the next street.

He reached the mouth of the alley while the redcoats were yet perhaps twenty yards distant.

At this instant the advance guard of the pursuing redcoats came around the corner.



They set up a loud yell as they saw the party of redcoats coming down the street toward Dick.

"Stop him! Catch him!" they cried. "Head him off! He's a rebel spy!"

But Dick did not wait to be headed off.

He had now reached the alley.

He darted into it.

He ran down the alley with all his might.

There were no lights in the alley, of course, but it was not very dark owing to the fact that the ground was covered with snow.

The redcoats entered the alley and ran down it in pursuit of Dick.

Dick ran onward at his best speed.

When Dick was almost to the next street he was treated to a surprise.

It was an unpleasant surprise, too.

Dick suddenly found his way barred.

He found himself confronted by what seemed to be a solid wall.

A quick glance upward and to each side showed Dick that the seeming wall was in reality the rear end of a building.

He was in a blind alley.

It did not go through to the other street at all.

It extended to the rear of the building, and there stopped.

"Jove!" thought Dick. "Here's a go! I have run straight into a trap. What am I to do?"

He glanced back.

The redcoats were half way down the alley and advancing at their best speed.

They would be upon him in a few moments.

Dick realized that whatever he did must be done quickly.

Again he looked about him.

To the right and to the left were the small back yards behind business houses.

It would be impossible to hide in these yards.

He must do something, however.

And at once.

Dick saw a light in the rear of the building at the right-hand side from where he stood.

The thought struck him that perhaps he might be able to get into this building at the rear and go through, and out at the front.

In this way he might escape the redcoats.

The latter were now close upon Dick.

Had they desired, they could have shot him down.

But they evidently wished to capture him alive.

The leader of the redcoats was now within ten yards of Dick.

"Surrender!" he cried. "Up with your hands and surrender, or we will fill your body full of lead!"

At this instant a door in the rear of the building in front of Dick opened.

"Quick, in here!" cried a voice.

It was dark within the building.

Dick could not see the owner of the voice.

Dick realized that he would be taking chances in entering the building.

He decided to risk it, however.

He leaped through the open doorway.

The door went shut with a slam.

The sound of a bar dropping into place was heard.

Then Dick suddenly felt himself enveloped from head to foot in the folds of what seemed to be a thick blanket.

At the same instant he felt himself seized by numerous hands.

## CHAPTER IX.

### DICK ESCAPES.

Dick struggled desperately.

He was powerless, however.

The blanket or whatever it was enveloped Dick so tightly and completely that he could not use his arms.

He could do nothing.

Then, too, he was almost smothered.

It seemed as if he could not get his breath.

Dick felt a choking sensation.

Presently his senses seemed to be leaving him.

Dick struggled and gasped in a desperate effort to get his breath.

It availed him nothing.

He could not do it, and presently his senses left him altogether.

How long Dick was insensible, he did not know, nor could he think where he was.

He could see that he was in a small room, but that did not give him any information.

He could see this by the light of a candle which stood at one side of the room.

One thing Dick realized quite forcibly, however, and that was that he was a prisoner.

His wrists were bound together behind his back.

He was lying stretched out on a cot.



The room was scantily furnished.

In fact, about all there was in the room were the cot, a stool-chair and a small table on which stood the candle.

Dick was alone in the room.

He knitted his brows and pondered the situation.

He wondered why he had been made a prisoner.

He wondered who had made him a prisoner.

He could not understand it at all.

He asked himself if the people who had captured him were redcoats.

He could hardly believe that they were.

He believed that had they been redcoats they would have taken him to the prison where the patriots were kept in durance.

Think as he would, however, Dick could not settle the matter to his satisfaction.

He finally gave the puzzle up as being impossible of solution.

Presently Dick heard footsteps.

Some one was approaching.

There came the rattle of a key in the lock of the door.

Then the door opened.

A man entered the room.

Dick turned his head and looked at the man.

The fellow was not over-prepossessing in appearance.

He was dark, ferrety-eyed and ratty-faced.

Dick did not speak.

He waited for the newcomer to do so.

The man closed the door and looked at Dick.

"So you've come to, have you?" he remarked.

"Yes," replied Dick, quietly, "I've come to."

The man looked at Dick, searchingly.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Who am I?" he remarked, deliberately.

"Yes, who are you?"

Dick's lip curled slightly.

"Don't you know who I am?" he asked.

The man shook his head.

"No," he replied, "I don't."

"Then why have you made me a prisoner?"

"We made up our minds that you were some person of importance."

"Who are 'we'?"

"Oh, myself and some friends of mine."

"And you and your friends think I am a person of some importance?"

"Yes."

"What made you think so?"

"Because you were being chased by a lot of British soldiers."

"Ah! Then why did you not turn me over to them?"

The fellow winked one eye.

He looked at Dick, shrewdly.

"That's simple enough," he said. "We thought there might be some money in it for us if we held you a prisoner and kept quiet about it for a while."

Dick gave the fellow a look of scorn.

"So that's your scheme?" he remarked.

"Yes."

"Where am I?" asked Dick, abruptly. "Is this the same building I entered when you made me a prisoner?"

The man hesitated, slightly.

Then he nodded.

"Yes, it is the same building," he said.

Dick looked puzzled.

"How did you keep that gang of redcoats out?" he asked. "I should have thought they would have broken the door down."

The man laughed.

"They did try," he said. "They pounded upon it at a terrible rate and pushed against it, but they could not force it open."

Dick said nothing in reply.

The man was silent, also, for a few moments.

Then he said:

"You haven't told me yet who you are."

"No, I haven't."

"Are you going to?"

Dick shook his head.

"No, I am not," he said.

Then as an after-thought, he said:

"Why didn't you go out and ask some of the redcoats who were chasing me?"

"They would have made us give you up, if we had done that."

"True," said Dick, "they might have done that."

"Yes; we preferred to wait and find out in our own way."

"How are you going to do it?" asked Dick, in a seemingly careless tone of voice.

"I don't see as there is any harm in telling you," the man replied. "One of my companions has gone to British headquarters. He will bring some of the officers back with him; and if you are, as we think, a person of importance they will recognize you."

"Oh, that's the way you are going to do it, is it?"

"Yes."

"How long do you think it will be before they'll be here?"

"I don't know. Half or three-quarters of an hour, I suppose."



The man remained a few minutes longer and then took his departure.

As soon as the man had gone, Dick fell to thinking.

He did not like the situation at all.

The outlook was not pleasing.

When the man should return accompanied by British officers, he would, no doubt, be recognized.

Then he would be turned over to the British.

His death as a spy would, undoubtedly, soon follow.

Dick wondered if it might be possible for him to escape.

He looked around the room.

There was but one door and it was locked.

There was a window, but it was probably fastened.

If it were not, however, it would make no difference, as Dick's arms were bound.

Dick wondered if he might be able to free his arms.

He tested the cord which bound his wrists.

It did not take much to convince him that it would be impossible to break the cord.

It was too strong.

Thinking that he might stretch the cord enough so that he could get his hands loose, Dick exercised all his strength and strained at the cord.

It had but little effect upon it.

He realized that it would be impossible to stretch the cord sufficiently to enable him to get his hands loose.

He quit trying.

He decided that he might as well save his strength.

In glancing about the room Dick's eyes fell upon the lighted candle.

Dick gave a start.

A sudden thought struck him.

Why not burn the rope so that it would come loose?

If he could burn the rope half in two, he believed it would weaken it sufficiently so that he could break it.

But could he do it?

Dick did not know, but he was determined to find out.

He swung his legs to the floor and rose to a sitting posture.

He looked at the candle.

How was he to get his wrists up to the candle flame.

They were bound in such a manner that he could lift his arms only slightly.

Then the thought struck Dick:

The stool!

He could stand on the stool and then his wrists would be just about even with the flame of the candle.

The stool was not near the table, but Dick's feet were free and he could slide the stool across the floor with his foot.

Rising to his feet he proceeded to do this.

He scooted the stool over to what he thought was about the right place, and then stepped up onto it.

He turned his back toward the table.

He extended his arms out behind him and held his wrists in such a manner that the rope would be in the flame of the candle.

It was impossible for Dick to get a good view of his wrists and the rope, and he had to go almost entirely by guess.

The result was that he burned his wrists quite severely during the minute or two that it took to burn the rope sufficiently so that he could break it.

He made several trials before succeeding, but finally broke the rope.

His arms were free!

An exclamation of satisfaction escaped Dick.

"Good!" he cried. "Now that my arms are free, I may be able to escape, after all."

Dick stepped to the door and tried the knob.

The door was locked.

Then he turned his attention to the window.

It was not fastened.

He succeeded in raising it.

He looked out.

He knew where he was, at a glance.

He was looking right down into the alley, up which he had run when pursued by the redcoats.

It was evident, therefore, that he was in a rear room of the building.

He was in the second story.

At this instant Dick heard footsteps.

There was such a trampling of feet that he knew there must be several persons coming.

"There come those fellows with the redcoats," thought Dick. "I must get out of here quickly, or it will be too late."

Dick lost no time.

He climbed over the window-sill and let himself down on the outside.

He let himself down at full length and hung there for an instant.

He heard the key turn in the lock of the door to the room he had just left.

He waited no longer.

Letting go his hold he dropped.

Downward he shot.

It was quite a drop, but there was such a deep snow on the ground that Dick was jarred scarcely at all.



The snow was soft and gave under Dick's feet, causing him to fall, however.

Before he could rise he heard the sound of excited voices above.

The men had entered the room and discovered that the prisoner had escaped.

Dick realized that the men would notice the open window at once.

In case they had pistols, which was likely, they might succeed in wounding Dick and prevent his escape, after all.

Dick knew he had no time to spare.

He leaped to his feet.

He ran up the alley as swiftly as possible.

He had gone but a few paces when he heard excited voices and exclamations.

"There he goes!"

"Yes, there he is."

"Can't we stop him?"

Then a loud voice called out:

"Halt! Stop where you are. Stop, or we will riddle you with bullets!"

## CHAPTER X.

### A NEW CONVERT.

But Dick did not stop.

After making such an effort to escape, he was not the youth to halt at the command of any man.

The threat of being fired upon had no effect whatever.

Dick ran all the faster.

Still it was impossible to make very great speed through the soft snow.

He knew that he could not get out of pistol-shot distance before the man could fire.

Crack! crack! crack! crack! crack!

The men had fired.

Dick heard two or three of the bullets whistle past his head.

One went through his coat-sleeve and wounded him slightly in the arm.

Dick did not slacken his speed a particle.

He ran onward as rapidly as possible.

He thought that he would be able to get out of pistol-shot distance before the men could fire a second volley.

This proved to be the case.

None of the bullets came anywhere near Dick, the second time the men fired.

Dick breathed a sigh of relief.

He did not slacken his pace, however.

He felt confident that the men would pursue him.

He was right about this.

When he reached the end of the alley he glanced back.

The men were just emerging through the back doorway of the building from which Dick had just escaped.

Dick turned up the street and made his way rapidly along.

He did not have much fear that the men would overtake him.

He felt confident that he could escape.

As he went along he was wondering what he should do.

He felt that there was really no necessity for him to remain in the city any longer.

He had learned that General Howe had no intention of attacking the patriot army.

This was what he had come to Philadelphia to learn.

Dick decided to return to Valley Forge that night.

"It will be rather hard on Major," the youth thought, "but he will probably have plenty of time to rest before I will wish to ride him again."

Dick made his way in the direction of the livery stable where he had left his horse.

The youth turned one corner after another until confident that he had thrown his pursuers off the track.

Then he went straight to the livery stable.

He paid his score, mounted Major and rode away.

It was still snowing, but not so hard as it had been.

It was now in the early morning hours.

When Dick came to Brinker's tavern he was surprised to see a light shining through a window of the barroom.

"I wonder what that means?" he asked himself. "Mr. Brinker is keeping rather late hours, I should say."

Acting upon the impulse of the moment, Dick brought Major to a stop, and, leaping down, he tied the horse to a post.

He made his way to the door.

He placed his hand on the knob, but paused as the sound of voices came to his ears.

Dick placed his ear close to the door and listened, intently.

"We'll drink a toast, my men," he heard a voice say. "Fill up your glasses. You, too, friend Brinker, fill up your glass, also."

"A toast! A toast!" was the cry, in a chorus of voices.

The words came to Dick's ears quite distinctly.

It was a cold night, and the door had contracted sufficiently so that there was plenty of room for the sound to issue forth between the door and the frame.



There was the sound of clinking glasses, and then a voice cried:

"The toast, Gerrold! Give us the toast!"

There was a brief silence, and then a voice was heard:

"All right; here is the toast: Long live good King George, and may he have many as true friends in America as our loyal and true-hearted Brinker has proved himself to be. Drink it down!"

There was a brief silence, during which the men were undoubtedly draining their wine glasses.

Dick hardly knew what to think.

If there was anything in the words used by the toast-master, Mr. Brinker was a rank Tory.

Assuming that there was something in it, Dick could not help feeling greatly surprised.

Ever since the patriot army had been in camp at Valley Forge, Dick and his "Liberty Boys" had been in the habit of stopping at Brinker's Tavern whenever they happened to be in the vicinity.

This was often.

Mr. Brinker had posed as a patriot and a friend of the cause of Liberty.

He had talked so freely and positively that Dick had believed him.

"Can it be possible that while he has been posing as a friend he has been an enemy?"

Dick could not do otherwise than believe that such was the case.

Still the proof was not yet positive.

Mr. Brinker might be fooling the redcoats and making them think he was loyal to the king when he was not.

In the hope that the question might be settled, Dick kept his ear close to the door and listened, intently.

It did not take long for the settling of the question.

Mr. Brinker himself now spoke up:

"Thanks, Captain Gerrold," he said. "I appreciate your words very much. I certainly am loyal to our king, and have tried to do my duty. It has not been much that I could do, simply imparting to your commander-in-chief such information as I have become possessed of regarding the patriot army. Such as they are, my services are always at the command of the king."

Dick heard the tavern-keeper's words plainly.

"The old rascal!" thought Dick. "He certainly duped us nicely, but I'll make him wish he had not pretended to be our friend when he was our enemy."

Dick was angry.

He would have to bide his time, however.

Brinker was in his own barroom, surrounded by a gang of redcoats.

Dick could do nothing at present to even up the score which he felt that he owed the man.

He could wait, however.

He remained at the door for perhaps a quarter of an hour.

He learned that the redcoats were members of a foraging party which had got lost in the snowstorm and had wandered around for several hours before finding the tavern.

They had managed to arouse Brinker, and were now trying to drive the chill out of their bodies by imbibing plenty of wine.

When Dick had heard all he cared to, he mounted his horse and rode onward.

He reached Valley Forge at about five o'clock.

He placed Major in his stall in a stable and then entering the cabin in which he had his quarters, Dick lay down in his bunk, without undressing, and was asleep almost instantly.

He was up and had eaten his breakfast by half-past eight o'clock.

Then he made his way to General Washington's headquarters.

The commander-in-chief was surprised to see Dick back so soon.

"Surely you have not been to Philadelphia and back, Dick?" he remarked.

Dick nodded.

"Yes, I have been to Philadelphia, your excellency," he replied.

"You have made a remarkably quick trip."

"Yes, so I have; but I learned all that I wished to know, and decided to return at once."

Washington's eyes shone.

"That is your way, Dick," he said, approvingly, "and a good way it is, too. But what did you learn?"

Dick proceeded to tell the commander-in-chief what he had learned.

Washington listened, eagerly.

When Dick had finished, the commander-in-chief nodded.

There was a pleased look on his face.

"Well, Dick," he said, "I am glad to know that the British do not intend attacking us. It is quite a relief, I assure you."

"I should judge so, your excellency."

"Yes, indeed. You have done well in securing this information."

"I am glad you are pleased."

Dick remained a while longer, talking to the commander-in-chief, and then, when the interview was at an end, he withdrew and returned to his own quarters.



Dick told Bob Estabrook what he had discovered regarding Mr. Brinker, the tavern-keeper.

"Great guns, Dick!" exclaimed Bob, "you don't men to say that old rascal has been fooling us all the time!"

"Yes, Bob, he duped us nicely."

"The old hypocrite! And all the time he was pretending to be our friend, he was our enemy."

"You're right, Bob; and every bit of information which he secured from us he carried at once to the British."

Bob's eyes flashed.

"Say, Dick, he ought to be hung!"

"Oh, not quite so bad as that, I guess, Bob."

"Well, he ought to be shot, then."

Dick smiled.

"I see you would be in for finishing him, Bob," said Dick.

Bob nodded.

"You're right about that, old man."

"Well, Bob, I don't blame you much," said Dick. "I suppose I would be in for doing the same thing were it not for——"

Bob started and gave Dick a quick look.

He nodded his head.

"Ah, I understand, Dick!" he said. "You would be in for hanging or shooting the old rascal were it not for his daughter Mary. Isn't that right?"

"That's it, exactly, Bob. Mary is a good girl and a true-hearted patriot. I could not think of causing her pain by hurting her father."

"Now that you mention it, neither could I, Dick."

"I could not think of causing Mary pain by hurting her father, Bob," repeated Dick, "but——"

"But what, Dick?"

"I have made up my mind to give him a good scare."

There was a look of interest on Bob's face.

"Good!" exclaimed Bob. "Tell me all about it, Dick."

Dick proceeded to do so.

He told Bob his plan in detail.

"Hurrah!" exclaimed Bob. "That is a good scheme. We'll learn the old rascal a lesson before we get through with him!"

\* \* \* \* \*

About the middle of the afternoon of a not very cold day, a party of blue-coated horsemen rode up to Brinker's Tavern.

The horsemen were Dick Slater and his "Liberty Boys."

A week had passed since Dick's return from Philadelphia.

There had been several days of moderately mild weather.

The sun had shone with sufficient effect so that the snow had all melted.

The ground was bare.

Bob Estabrook and Mark Morrison leaped off their horses, and, passing through the gateway, made their way to the door of the tavern.

Opening the door they entered.

They were gone but a few moments, seemingly.

Then they emerged from the house bringing Mr. Brinker the tavern-keeper, with them.

Each youth had the man by an arm and they pulled him along in spite of his attempts at holding back.

"Here is the man who pretended to be a friend, Dick," said Bob, when they were close to the gate. "What shall we do with him?"

"Bind his arms!" said Dick, sternly.

Mr. Brinker was evidently frightened.

"W-what d-does t-this m-mean, D-Dick?" he stammered.

"It means, Mr. Brinker," said Dick, sternly, "that we have discovered the deceit which you have been practising upon us."

"I—I don't know w-what you mean."

"Yes, you do. I will acknowledge that you duped us for quite a while, Mr. Brinker, but we have discovered that you are an enemy, that you are a Tory and a spy; and now we are going to deal with you as you deserve to be dealt with."

Bob and Mark were now binding Mr. Brinker's arms together behind his back.

As Dick finished speaking he happened to glance toward the tavern and saw Mary standing in the doorway.

The girl was as pale as a ghost, and was evidently terribly frightened.

Dick leaped to the ground.

"When you get his arms tied behind his back," he said to Bob, "take him to that tree yonder, throw the rope over one of the limbs and get ready to swing the traitor up!"

The frightened tavern-keeper began pleading for his life, in a stammering voice, but Dick paid no attention to him.

Instead, he hastened to where the girl stood.

"My father!" the girl exclaimed, in a trembling voice, as the youth approached. "Surely you will not hang him, Dick?"

The girl clasped her hands and looked at Dick, entreatingly.

Dick took Mary's hand and pressed it, reassuringly.

"Have no fear, Mary," he said, gently, "for your sake your father shall not be hung. We are simply going to give him a scare. If we can do so we are going to frighten him into fore-swearing allegiance to the king and swearing allegiance to the cause of Liberty. In other words, Mary



we are going to try, if you do not object, to change your father from a Tory to a patriot."

The girl's face brightened.

She was so glad that her father was not to be hung that the blood came back to her face, and she smiled.

"I shall offer no objections, Dick," she said. "I am, as you know, a patriot, and if you succeed in changing my father from a Tory to a patriot, I shall be happy. Go ahead, Dick, but don't let your 'Liberty Boys' forget themselves and hang my father in reality."

"I will see to it that they do not do so, Mary."

Dick hastened to where Mr. Brinker stood.

There was a rope around his neck and the other end had been thrown over the limb of a large tree, under which he stood.

Several of the "Liberty Boys" had hold of the end of the rope.

The tavern-keeper was pale with fear.

"Stand ready to pull him up when I give the word, boys!" said Dick, in a stern voice.

"All right!" came the reply, in a chorus.

Mr. Brinker fell upon his knees.

He looked up at Dick, beseechingly.

"Oh, Dick, don't hang me!" he pleaded. "I—I will d-do anything y-yo w-want me to do i-if y-you will s-spare m-my l-life!"

Dick made a pretense of pondering for a few moments, during which the tavern-keeper watched him, eagerly and anxiously.

Then Dick said, slowly and deliberately:

"Swear that you will renounce allegiance to the king,

and that from this day forward you will be a patriot and do all you can to aid the glorious cause of Liberty, and we will spare your life. What is your answer?"

"I swear it!"

Dick made a gesture and the "Liberty Boys" took the rope from around the man's neck at once.

"You are free," said Dick. "You are free for so long as you remember your oath and keep it. If you are caught double-dealing again we will put another rope around your neck, and next time there will be no escape for you."

"I'll keep my oath," the man hastened to say.

The man's tone was sincere and Dick felt confident that he meant what he said.

Mary Brinker was a happy girl when her father told her that henceforth he would be found on the side of the patriots, doing all that he could to aid the glorious cause of Liberty.

THE END.

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